SOPHISTICATED SUSPENSE
44
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SWAMP THING
WINNER OF TWO 1984 EAGLE AWARDS!
1935
50
DC
1985
BY ALAN MOORE, STEPHEN BISSETTE AND JOHN TOTLEBEN

TEST ME.

G'WAN... THINK OF A NUMBER!

WHUH?

I SAID TEST ME, THINK OF A NUMBER BETWEEN ONE AND ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FOUR.

UHH... FIFTY-EIGHT.

"FIFTY-EIGHT. LET'S SEE...

"HER EYES WERE GRAY-GREEN, LIKE AN AGGIE I ONCE HAD, ONLY WITH LITTLE FLECKS OF OCHRE AROUND THE CENTER. ASK ME ANOTHER."

UHH... WAIT A MINUTE... I DON'T GET THIS. IS THIS, LIKE, SOME SORT OF PARTY PIECE OR WHAT?

C'MON... JUST ASK ME A NUMBER.

OHH... WHAT THE HELL. ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-TWO.

"AHHH! ONE THIRTY-TWO!

"HE HAD BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTIFUL BLUE EYES. I MEAN, JUST PERFECT, LIKE THE SKY, LIKE THE SORT OF BLUE YOU ONLY GET IN PAINTINGS...

"I MEAN, HOW CAN THEY CALL ME CALLOUS?"

BAR

HOW CAN THEY CALL ME CALLOUS WHEN I REMEMBER EVERY SINGLE PAIR OF EYES?

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GRCHUKT
PWORK
KIVUK!

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SWAMP THING

CREATED BY LEN WEIN and BERNI WRIGHTSON

BOGEYMEN

KAREN BERGER: EDITOR * TATJANA WOOD COLORIST * JOHN COSTANZA: LETTERER

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

"HELLO"?

ALEC, YOU'VE JUST POURED YOURSELF OUT OF MY SINK.

I THINK I'M GOING TO NEED SOMETHING MORE THAN "HELLO".

OH... THAT...

I THOUGHT THAT... YOU MUST BE TIRED... OF VISITING ME... OUT IN THE SWAMPS... ALL THE TIME...

BY SHIFTING MY CONSCIOUSNESS... TO THE FLORA... IN THE PIPE SYSTEM... I WAS ABLE... TO VISIT YOU...

THAT'S, UH, THAT'S VERY THOUGHTFUL OF YOU. I'M JUST GLAD MY HAIR'S THIS COLOR ALREADY.

HEY, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE BEEN BACK TO MY PLACE...

I FEEL I SHOULD OFFER YOU COFFEE.

PLEASE... HAVE ONE YOURSELF! SHOULD I COME THROUGH... INTO THE LIVING ROOM...?

UH... SURE! JUST LET ME GET SOME NEWSPAPER, BECAUSE THE CARPET'S SORTA NEW. I WON'T BE A MOMENT...

THERE... JUST TRY TO KEEP ON THE PAPER, OKAY?

DID YOU COME BY FOR ANY PARTICULAR REASON? WAS THERE SOMETHING YOU WANTED TO TALK ABOUT?...

YES... CONSTANTINE... STILL HAS NOT CONTACTED ME...

SO YOU'RE FINALLY SICK OF THE SUPERCILIOUS ENGLISH CREEP! YOU DON'T HAVE TO PUT UP WITH BEING SHUNTED AROUND AND MANIPULATED ANYMORE! THAT'S GREAT!

UH...

...ISN'T IT?

I...AM NOT SURE...

HE LEADS ME AROUND THE COUNTRY... TANTALIZING ME WITH MYSTERIES... AND THEN VANISHES...WITH SO MUCH... LEFT UNEXPLAINED..

I CANNOT BELIEVE... THAT THE TRAIL... JUST PETERS OUT...

SO MUCH... SEEMS STRANGE ABOUT THE WORLD...THE GUIES...THE WEATHER... EVEN THE CONSTELLATIONS SEEM DIFFERENT...

WITHOUT CONSTANTINE... I AM NOT SURE...HOW I STAND...

HEY, UH, I'M SORRY, COULD YOU KEEP ON THE PAPER? THANKS...

OH! AND THE WINDOW! YOU BETTER NOT GO TOO NEAR THE WINDOW IN CASE SOMEBODY SEES...

I MEAN, IT'S NOT THAT I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU BRINGING DOWN THE PROPERTY VALUES OR ANYTHING...

NO...I UNDERSTAND...

I'M... INCONVENIENCING YOU...I'D...BETTER GO...

HEY, LOOK, I'M SORRY, ALEC. I JUST WASN'T PREPARED. LISTEN, PERHAPS NEXT TIME, IF YOU LET ME KNOW YOU'RE COMING...

YES... PERHAPS...

AND LISTEN, DON'T WORRY ABOUT CONSTANTINE. HE'S NOT WORTH IT. YOU SHOULD BE GLAD YOU'RE RID OF HIM! HE JUST...

ALEC?

PHLEB!

BLUP

HMMP

OH, WELL...

IF YOU'RE GOING TO SULK...

SQUP PLERP!

SHLIK

THWEP SQULK PWUP THWULLUP PWEP

WEW!

DAYTON?

COME ON, MATE, SNAP OUT OF IT. THERE'S NO POINT SULKING.

ALL RIGHT, SO THERE'S AN APOCALYPSE GOING ON OUTSIDE. SO WHAT?

BLUE FLAME

I MEAN, IT'S NOT THE END OF THE WORLD...

CONSTANTINE, THIS IS ALL A JOKE TO YOU, ISN'T IT? DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?

OH, GOD, I WANT A DRINK...

NO YOU DON'T, YOU WANT SOME NICE FRESH AIR, C'MON...GET YOUR COAT ON...

AND LISTEN... DON'T WORRY ABOUT THIS CRISIS BUSINESS. IT'S WHAT COMES AFTER THAT YOU SHOULD BE WORRYING ABOUT.

JOHN, WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS SO DAMN CRYPTIC? I MEAN, EARLIER YOU SAID SOMETHING ABOUT A BOG THING...

SWAMP THING, ACTUALLY. YES... HE'S QUITE CRUCIAL, BUT I THINK I'LL LET HIM STEW FOR A BIT LONGER.

HE'S SO CAUGHT UP IN THE WHOLE SITUATION BY NOW, THEY'RE BOUND TO HAVE NOTICED HIM.

THERE'S NO NEED TO SEND HIM LOOKING FOR TROUBLE. TROUBLE WILL BE LOOKING FOR HIM.

OH, GOD. JOHN, LOOK...

LOOK AT THE SKY.

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

HMM.

IT'S A BIT LIKE 2001, ISN'T IT?

EXCUSE ME... IT'S DANGEROUS OUT HERE. MOST PEOPLE ARE KEEPING INDOORS...

WE'RE NOT SURE WHAT'S CAUSING THE DISTURBANCE, BUT IT'S IN THE BEST POSSIBLE HANDS. IN THE MEANTIME...

IT'S ALL RIGHT, SQUIRE. THIS GENTLEMAN'S ONE OF YOU. YOU'VE HEARD OF MENTO?

JOHN, C'MON. HE WOULDN'T REMEMBER...

MENTO. NO, I...

OH, WAIT... MENTO WHO WAS ATTACHED TO THE DOOM PATROL?

YES, YES, THAT'S RIGHT. MARRIED TO ONE OF THEM ACTUALLY. YOU WERE AT OUR WEDDINGS...

UUH... OH. YES! OF COURSE!

WELL, UH, LISTEN, I'M SURE YOU AND YOUR FRIEND WILL BE AS SAFE AS ANYBODY. I HAVE TO GO. THERE'S A LOT TO DO.

YES, YES, OF COURSE. GOOD LUCK.

THERE, YOU SEE?

THAT'S THE THING ABOUT NIGHT'S LIKE THIS.

YOU NEVER KNOW WHO YOU'RE GOING TO RUN INTO...

Y'KNOW...

Y'KNOW, FELLA, IT'S LUCKY YOU AN' ME MET UP! NEVER WOULDA MADE IT HOME WITHOUT YA...

S'FUNNY... DON'T USUALLY GET AS PLASTERED AZZISS. MUSTA BIN DRINKIN' ON AN EMPTY STUMMICK. GETS YA EVERY TIME...

PIONEER HOUSE

HEY, LISSEN... LISSEN, WHEN WE FIND MY STREET, THE HOUSE NUMMER IS NINE'Y-SEVEN...

"NINETY-SEVEN: BAG LADY. ONE EYE WAS BROWN, THE OTHER HAD A CAST OR A CATARACT. MAYBE BOTH.

"IT LOOKED LIKE SOMEBODY HAD SHOT HER IN THE HEAD WITH A MUSKET BALL OF FROSTED GLASS."

HUH? NO... NO, I MEAN MY HOUSE. MY HOUSE IS NINE'Y-SEVEN...

HEY, ARE WE GOING THE RIGHT WAY? I DON'T RECOGNIZE...

DON'T WORRY. IT'S A SHORT CUT. WE'LL HAVE YOU HOME BY TWELVE...

TELL ME... WHEN YOU WERE A KID, WERE YOU AFRAID OF THE BOGEYMAN?

UH... WELL, YEAH, I GUESS. I GUESS EVERYBODY WAS. BUT...?

I KNEW THE BOGEYMAN. THE BOGEYMAN. KNEW HIM PERSONALLY.

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

"HE PRETENDED TO BE OUR SCHOOL JANITOR, BACK WHEN I WAS IN THIRD GRADE. BUT I KNEW, SEE? I KNEW HE WAS THE BOGEYMAN.

"HIS EYES WERE LIKE NAILS IN YELLOWED IVORY. THEY GAVE HIM AWAY."

IF YOU RAN IN THE HALLWAY, HE'D GRAB THE SHORT HAIR AT YOUR TEMPLES AND PULL IT.

FUNNY SORT OF PAIN. MADE YOU FEEL SICK.

OOUH. DON'T TALK ABOUT SICK...

"HE BROUGHT COFFEE TO SCHOOL, IN A FLASK. I STOLE A GLASS TEST TUBE FROM THE SCIENCE ROOM AND GROUND IT UP WITH A MORTAR AND PESTLE. IT WAS EASY.

"HE WAS NUMBER ONE."

NOBODY SUSPECTED ME. THE BOGEYMAN WAS GONE. HE COULDN'T SCARE ME ANYMORE.

PRETTY SOON, I REALIZED HE'D LEFT A VACANCY, AS BOGEYMAN. IF I DIDN'T FILL IT, SOMEBODY ELSE WOULD!

HEY, WHERE ARE WE? IT'S... ;UUK;

"JEANNIE TUCKER WAS MY FIRST PROPER ASSIGNMENT AS BOGEYMAN. A BIG, SLOW GIRL AROUND FIFTEEN, NONE TOO BRIGHT.

"WE WENT UP TO THE GRAVEL PITS TOGETHER. HER EYES LOOKED LIKE BUTTERSCOTCH. SHE WAS NUMBER TWO."

HEY, LEAVE OFF WITH ALL THE NUMBERS, HUH? I AIN'T FEELIN' SO GOOD...

I MEAN, NUMBERS, NUMBERS, WHAT IS IT WITH YOU?

NUMBERS ARE IMPORTANT, FRIEND.

EVERYBODY HAS A NUMBER...

... AND YOURS JUST CAME UP.

HUNH...?

HEY! WAIT!

WHAT THE HELL'S ALL...

TEST TO LAS ASO PRUE

:CUUGUHHH:

"ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIVE."

"I GO THROUGH HIS WALLET. NOBODY PAYS ME ANY WAGES FOR DOING THIS JOB, SO I COLLECT A SORT OF BOGEYMAN TAX.

"I COUNT THE BILLS. THIRTY-THREE BUCKS.

"THIRTY-THREE...

"HMMM.

"FURTHER DOWN THE TRACK I TURN AND LOOK BACK AT HIM, LYING THERE, STILL AND QUIET IN THE LEAFMOLD. HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S MOONBATHING.

"NO NEED TO COVER HIM. SWAMPS ARE BOGEYMAN TERRITORY. THEY'LL PROTECT ME.

"PROBABLY NOBODY WILL FIND THE BODY FOR WEEKS..."

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

"BOGEYMAN NIGHT, BOGEYMAN MOON... I'M GLAD I CAME HERE.

"IT WAS JUST AN IMPULSE, AS IF SOMETHING HERE TELLING ME THAT LOUISIANA WAS WHERE IT WAS HAPPENING, THAT LOUISIANA NEEDED A BOGEYMAN...

"BOGEYMAN. JUST THE WORD HAS A KIND OF AURA AROUND IT.

"I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY PEOPLE AVOID IT, WHY THEY INVENT OTHER NAMES, LIKE 'SERIAL KILLER' OR WHATEVER...

"I MEAN, WHAT'S WRONG WITH BOGEYMAN?

"WAIT A MINUTE... WHERE AM I? ALL THESE TREES LOOK THE SAME. IF THEY HAD EYES I COULD TELL THEM APART, BUT...

"LET'S SEE. IF I BEAR LEFT I THINK I SHOULD REACH HIGHWAY 71...

"AND THEN, WHEN I REACH ALEXANDRIA, I CAN HEAD UP ACROSS THE STATE LINE TO ARKANSAS. IT'LL BE SAFE THERE. THE STATE POLICE DEPARTMENTS NEVER CONNECT.

"SO, FROM ALEXANDRIA I HAVE TO TAKE HIGHWAY 165...

"HMMM. ONE SIXTY-FIVE...

"THAT'S A COINCIDENCE. I WONDER WHAT IT MEANS?

"ALL COINCIDENCES MEAN SOMETHING. ASK ANYBODY IN MY LINE OF WORK.

"WELL, NOT EXACTLY MY LINE OF WORK. I MEAN, THERE'S ONLY ONE BOGEYMAN, RIGHT?

"I JUST MEAN PEOPLE WHO LIKE THE STUFF I LIKE.

"I KNOW GUYS LIKE THAT ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. THEY MOVE FROM STATE TO STATE, MEETING UP OCCASIONALLY, TRADING STORIES...

"IN PORTLAND I HEARD ABOUT A GUY WHO'D DONE SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTY!

"AWESOME.

"THE TRAGEDY IS, IT'S THE LOSERS WHO MAKE THE HEADLINES. CHARLIE MANSON, RICHARD SPECK, SON O' SAM...

"I MEAN, ADD THEIR SCORES TOGETHER, YOU STILL AIN'T IN TREBLE FIGURES!

"AM I GOING THE RIGHT WAY?

"THIS MUST BRING ME OUT ON THE HIGHWAY, BUT THE UNDERGROWTH SEEMS SO DENSE. MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE...

"AOW!

"GODDAMN JUNK GROWIN' ALL OVER THE PLACE! WHO NEEDS IT?

"I HAVE TO STOP, GET MY BEARINGS. ALSO MY BREATH... THIS GROUND, IT'S THE PITS. EVEN WALKING, IT WEARS YOU OUT...

"I LEAN AGAINST A TREE WHILE I SCRAPE THE MUD OFF MY BOOTS...

"AND

THE TREE

"TAKES

"MY

"HAND"!

YAAAAAAA

"WHAT WAS IT? A BEAR? WAS IT A BEAR? RUN. GET AWAY, OUT OF RANGE...

"I LOOK BACK, AND THERE IT IS, AGAINST THE MOONLIGHT. NOT A BEAR. A MAN. A BIG MAN.

"IT WAS A BEAR. I'M SURE.

"MAYBE A CAJUN? GOODAMN COONASS. IF HE THINKS HE...

"WAIT A MINUTE. IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S...

"...MELTING?

"I CAN'T HEAR IT FOLLOWING ME.

"TRICK OF THE LIGHT. SURE. SOME KINDA JUNK CAJUNS KNOW HOW TO DO. WELL, HE'S MADE A MISTAKE. MAN, IF HE KNEW. IF HE KNEW WHO HE WAS FOOLING WITH...

"HERE COMES ONE SIXTY-SIX.

"HE MUST BE BEHIND ME SOMEPLACE. OKAY. OKAY, I'LL WAIT UP HERE. I NEVER HAD A CAJUN BEFORE. I WONDER WHAT COLOR THEIR EYES ARE? ARE THEY BROWN, OR BLUE, OR..."

CONTINUED ON 2-29 PAGE FOLLOWING.

SHOKK CHOK SHOK

AAAAGH!

NNGUH!

GGUH!

"GOT HIM! I GOT HIM! I MUST HAVE...

"WHERE? WHERE IS HE? HE'S GONE. BUT I GOT HIM! I...

"WAIT. WHAT'S...

"HIS HAND. JEEZ. I CUT OFF HIS HAND.

"HOW DID I DO THAT? I JUST SLASHED AT HIM. I...

"I JUST..."

EEUUUH! GET OFF! GET OFF A ME!

"AHH, NO, GOT MY ARMS, IT'S WET, CUT IT OFF, I'M HURTING MYSELF, WHAT IS IT, RUN, JUST RUN, THERE'S A WAY OUT...

"THERE HAS TO BE...

"...A WAY...

"...OUT.

"TURN. RUN. ANOTHER PATH. ANOTHER TRAIL. ANOTHER...

"NO. THIS IS ALL WRONG. THIS DOESN'T HAPPEN TO ME. THAT'S UNDERSTOOD. IT GOES WITH MY JOB. UNLESS...

"NO.

SHKLUPP!

"NO, THEY WOULDN'T. THEY WOULDN'T APPOINT ANY-ONE ELSE! NOT WITHOUT TELLING ME...

"I'M PERFECT FOR THIS JOB. I'VE ALWAYS DONE EVERYTHING BY THE BOOK. I NEVER PUT A FOOT WRONG. I..."

SLOCH

AW, NO. AW, HEY, NOT THIS WAY. NOT MUD...

I MEAN, LISTEN, I CAN TAKE IT, BUT...

SULLOPF

GLULGH

FLUP FLUP

AW HELL...

HEY... HEY, LISTEN! DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM? I KILLED ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIVE PEOPLE!

LISTEN... YOU TELL 'EM, RIGHT? YOU TELL 'EM WHO I WAS AND WHAT I DID!

I'M NOT ASHAMED.

MY NAME...

"I'M GOING UNDER. I'M GOING, I'M GOING, I'M..."

WH-WHERE AM I?

YOU'RE HERE. WITH US.

BUT... WHO ARE YOU?

THAT DEPENDS. WHO WOULD YOU LIKE TO TALK TO FIRST? YOU CAN DECIDE.

WAIT A MINUTE... I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHERE...

COME ON. IT'S SIMPLE...

JUST THINK OF A NUMBER.

"IN THE DARKNESS, SOMEBODY TAKES HOLD OF THE SHORT HAIR AT MY TEMPLE AND BEGINS TO TUG. I TRY TO SCREAM, BUT MY LUNGS ARE FILLED WITH MUD..."

ANOTHER MONSTER DEAD...

HOW MANY MORE?

HOW MANY MORE...BEFORE THIS COUNTRY...HAS BEEN SQUEEZED DRY...OF NIGHTMARES?

CONSTANTINE... LED ME THROUGH THE BADLANDS... PROMISING ME KNOWLEDGE... BUT DELIVERING... ONLY HORROR... AFTER HORROR...

THINGS... THAT CANNOT BE BURIED... OR FORGOTTEN... OR WALKED AWAY FROM...

IS THERE SOME PATTERN... THAT I SHOULD PERCEIVE... IN THIS SENSELESS PAGEANT... OF ATROCITY...?

IS THERE SOME TRUTH... THAT MAY BE DIVINED... FROM THE ENTRAILS... OF AMERICA...?

IT SEEMS USELESS...

I STRUGGLE... TO IMPOSE A STRUCTURE... THAT HAS MEANING... ON THE MADNESS THAT CHURNS... WITHIN THIS CONTINENT... WITHIN THIS WORLD...

BUT TONIGHT... I LOOKED INTO A MAN'S EYES... AND GLIMPSED THE ABYSS...

AND I FEAR... THAT IT MAY... BE BOTTOMLESS...

I KNOW... THAT THERE MUST BE AN ANSWER... A LIGHT IN THE BLACKNESS... BUT I DON'T KNOW... IF I CAN FIND IT... ON MY OWN.

CONSTANTINE...

CONSTANTINE... WHERE ARE YOU...?

WHY... DID YOU LEAVE ME... IN THE DARK...?

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

GRUNCH

RUSP

GRUNCH

BRRRRRRRRRRR

AAAAAA!

WHOOO.

HELLO? ABBY CABLE.

HELLO, MRS. CABLE. KEEPIN' WELL?

LISTEN, TELL YOUR BOYFRIEND TO BE IN SAN MIGUEL, CALIFORNIA, A WEEK FROM TODAY. TELL HIM IT'S HIS *LAST STOP* BEFORE THE FINALE.

THAT'S ALL. YOU CAN GET BACK TO YOUR BOOK NOW.

CLIK

B.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.

NEXT: GHOST DANCE!